Ann Arbor Rec and Ed
Youth Field Hockey League
Fall 2026 Rules

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Please note that major rule changes are boxed. Points of emphasis, minor rule changes and syntax changes appear in bold text.

The goal of the Community Education & Recreation Youth Field Hockey Program is to provide an enjoyable, healthy leisure experience for program participants. Players should be taught new skills and how to improve throughout the season with the support of their coaches and parents. Team won-lost records should not be stressed. We will not keep standings in the Youth Field Hockey League. The main objective of the program is to provide each participant with an equal opportunity to learn the game and have fun. Thank you for your support

1. All players

All players must be registered with Rec & Ed. Unregistered players will not be permitted to play. Coaches are not permitted to add and/or switch players to the roster, unless okayed by Youth Team Sports. Rec & Ed assigns all players to teams. Any coach playing an unregistered player and/or found switching players will face suspension and/or probation in accordance with the Team Sports Policy on Probation, Suspension, and Hearing Procedures.

2. Refund policy

Refund requests must be made in writing 24 hours before the player's first regularly scheduled game.

Refund requests must be emailed to cancel@aaps.k12.mi.us.

All refunds are subject to a $10.00 processing fee.

No player fee will be refunded after the first scheduled game.

Refunds will be paid by check or credited to the charge card depending on method of payment, and normally take four to six weeks to process.

3. Blood and bodily fluids

This rule provides guidelines for coaches and referees as to their responsibilities during a game should an injury or illness result in a player losing blood or other body fluids.

1) As soon as the official can see or has their attention called to a player who is bleeding, they must stop the game **immediately.**
2) The injured player must leave the game at that point and be substituted for.
3) The injured player must have the wound cleaned, the bleeding stopped and the wound covered before being allowed to re-enter the game. Any blood stained clothing must be removed as well.

4. Cancellations

Games are occasionally canceled due to inclement weather. If Rec & Ed cancels all games throughout the city on Saturday, announcements will be made on Team Sports Cancellations webpage: https://reced.a2schools.org/sports/home/team-sports-cancellations. If Rec & Ed cancels all games throughout the city on Sundays, announcements will be made between 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. Officials also have the authority to cancel games if weather or field conditions are not suitable for play. Department personnel and the referee are the only officials authorized to cancel games.

Note: When a weather warning is issued for Washtenaw County, during game times, games are cancelled for the day. If a weather warning is issued for Washtenaw County between 4:00pm and 6:00pm during the weekdays, practices are cancelled.

When thunder is heard or lightning is seen, games must be immediately suspended. Officials, players, and spectators should seek appropriate shelter during the delay. Officials must not resume play until thunder has not been heard and lightning has not been seen in the local sky for 30 minutes. The occurrence of thunder and lightning is not subject to interpretation or discussion. *Thunder is thunder, and lightning is lightning.*

5. Requests to Reschedule Games After the Season Begins

Contact your opponent to see if that coach is willing to reschedule.

Be willing and able to pay a $30.00 fee that will be charged to cover the cost of referees for your game. Referees have been scheduled for all games and have contracts for these games. This means Rec & Ed is obligated to pay the referee for the game you wish to change plus pay one additional referee for the rescheduled game. The coach/team wishing to reschedule will be responsible for the fee, not the opposing team. The fee must be received in our office five (5) days prior to the rescheduled game date.

Contact the Specialist for Youth Sports with the proposed date(s) and time(s) for the rescheduled game. You may use the "Request to Reschedule Game" form on the Coach Resource webpage. The game will only be rescheduled if Rec & Ed can identify an available field and qualified officials and a site supervisor to staff the contest.

6. Make-up Games

In the event Rec & Ed cancels all games on game day, the games will be rescheduled. Coaches will be notified of the make-up date by e-mail.

7. Forfeits

Games will be forfeited in the event that no one from a team is present.

8. Equipment

Coaches should be prepared to furnish a game ball for each game

All players must wear shin guards and a mouth guard. Players not wearing shin guards and a mouth guard will not be allowed to participate. **Coaches must check to make sure all of their players are properly equipped.** Each player needs their own hockey stick or one may be borrowed from Rec & Ed.

Note: Traditionally the team electing the first pass-back supplies the game ball.

9. Uniforms

All players must wear their team shirt during league games. If a player is not wearing their team shirt, they are not allowed to play. In cold weather, sweatshirts or jackets may be worn under the team shirt. This is so players and the officials are aware of who is on what team.

Exception: If a player is injured, blood stained clothing must be removed. If the injured player is able to continue playing, he/she may play in a shirt other than the team shirt.

10. Jewelry, casts, and other accessories

HAIR ACCESSORIES

Any hair accessory made of metal or hard plastic such as barrettes, hair clips or bobby pins are illegal and may not be worn. However, a player may wear hair beads as long as the hair is tied in a tight bun or adequately covered by a hair net to the satisfaction of the official.

HEADWEAR

Players may wear a headband. The headband must be worn on the forehead/crown and can not exceed a maximum of 2".

Under no circumstances are players in any Rec & Ed youth sports program allowed to wear bandanas.

CASTS, SPLINTS, BRACES AND PROSTHESES

In Rec & Ed soccer leagues casts, splints, and braces may be worn on the upper extremities as long as they are padded with at least ½" of closed cell, slow-recovery rubber or other material of the same minimum thickness and having similar physical properties. No casts, splints or braces may be worn on the lower extremities.

No protective equipment used in any Rec & Ed youth soccer program shall have exposed metal or hard material.

Prosthesis may be worn as long as the official's judgment of the prosthesis is no more dangerous to players than the corresponding human body part.

It is the responsibility of each coach to inform players and their parents whenever a player is guilty of an infraction of the Youth Sports Equipment and Apparel Rule. Any player who is in violation of the rule may not participate in any Rec & Ed contest until the player is in compliance with the rule. If a player cannot comply with the Youth Sports Equipment & Apparel Rule without significant delay, another player must substitute in for the player or the offending player's team must play short. Note that a player who leaves the game to remove jewelry or illegal apparel may be re-entered as a legal substitute once they comply with the equipment and apparel rule.

11. Center Pass

The game will begin with a pass from the center of the field. The center pass may be made with a push or slap shot in any direction. On a center pass, the ball must move at least one yard before a member of the same team may touch it. The defensive team must remain at least 5 yards from the ball until it is touched.

Drives (a shot with hands together) are not allowed at any grade level.

The team that wins the coin flip may choose to take the center pass or to attack either goal. The other team takes the option not chosen. A center pass should also restart the game following a goal. The center pass alternates between the teams at the start of each quarter or half (depending on which is selected at the beginning of the game).

12. Fouls

A. High Stick Lifting the stick above the shoulder, in front or back. A player shall not raise the stick in a manner that is dangerous, intimidating or hampering to another player.
B. Illegal Hit - Hitting the ball with the round side of the stick.
C. Shot on goal - The ball must be controlled (stopped or passed) before a legal shot on goal may occur from a long hit or penalty corner.
D. Penalty Corner - The ball must be taken outside the striking circle, then brought back in the striking circle, for a goal to be legal.
E. Advancing - Kicking the ball or contact with the feet, legs or body so that an advantage is gained.
F. Obstruction - Blocking an opponent's access to the ball with the stick or body.
G. Stick Obstruction - To hit, hook or hold an opponent's stick to gain an advantage.
H. Dangerous Play - Undercutting, lifting or dangerously hitting the ball into a player; or dangerous play of any kind using the stick or body.
I. Driving - Only push passes and slap hits are allowed. Back swings above the hip or drives with both hands together are not permitted at any grade level.
J. The field cannot cause a legal stroke to be ruled dangerous play.
K. Scoops, Lifts and Flicks of any kind are allowed if they are controlled and into space and not in the officials judgement deemed dangerous to players.
L. Bunching or three players on the ball is not a foul but is highly discouraged as a strategy.
M. Minimum Distance from the Ball - On all push-ins, long hits and free hits/pushes; all players must remain at least 5 yards from the ball.

Note: All fouls will be called based on the advantage principle.

13. Free Hit

For all fouls, a free hit will be awarded to the fouled team near the spot of the foul. All free hits into the striking circle must be taken from at least 5 yards off the striking circle. Defensive players must position themselves no closer than 5 yards from the ball on a free hit.

The player taking the free hit may be the next player to play the ball (a self pass) and in such case the ball need not travel one yard before it is played again. In any case, opponents must be at least 5 yards from the spot of the free hit. If an opponent is within that 5 yard area they must not interfere with the free hit or self pass and must not play or attempt to play the ball.

14. Goalies

There are currently no goalies allowed in our leagues. Furthermore, it is dangerous for players to stand stagnant in front of the goal, on the goal line and try to stop the shot. Coaches are encouraged to have the defense "tackle" the offensive players with the ball upon entering the striking circle. "Goaltending" can be called if coaches and players do not make an attempt to play one-on-one defense with the ball.

15. Goals

Goals will be scored only when contacted by an offensive player's stick while inside the striking circle

16. Coming-in (Replacing the Long Hit)

If the ball goes over the end line having last contacted a defensive player's stick, COMING IN will be called.

Coming In hits are positioned on the orange marker, 5 yards from the top of the striking circle, closest to where the ball crossed the end line. On Coming In Hits, players may position themselves anywhere on the field on both offense and defense as long as they are 5 yards from the ball.

17. Number of players

The recommended amount of players on the field is 7 a side. A minimum of four players is required to field a team. It is strongly recommended that teams with enough players be prepared to loan players to their opponent if their opponent is short players. Coaches should alert the official if they plan on playing less than 7 players, and officials and Site Supervisors will attempt to reconcile the issue among both teams. If one team is short players, the other team is not required to play short as well. Site Supervisors will have Pennies available to distinguish teams.

18. Offside

There is no offside. (There are enough other rules in field hockey!)

19. Out of Bounds

If the ball goes over the sideline, a push-in is taken by the opponent of the team that last touched the ball. The ball is placed on the spot where it went out-of-bounds and a player must push or hit it in-bounds.

If the offense hits the ball over the end line, out of bounds, the defensive team is awarded a free push from its 10-yard line.

20. Penalty Corner

The Offensive team may have 5 players involved in the penalty corners, and the remaining players must go to the midfield line until the ball is hit (Inserted)

The Inserter on the Offensive team may only hit the ball one time.

On a penalty corner, the ball must be taken outside the striking circle and then the ball must be brought back in the striking circle, in order for a goal to be legal.

If the defensive team fouls, in the officials judgment, intentionally hits the ball out of bounds over the end line, a penalty corner will be awarded to the offensive team.

On penalty corners, the ball is placed at one of the hash marks yards on either side of the goal (the side is chosen by the offensive team). Four defensive players must line up at the end line on the other side of the goal. The remaining players must line up at the midfield line until the ball is hit out.

On a penalty corner, IN ALL GRADE LEVELS, the ball must be taken outside the striking circle and then the ball must be brought back in the striking circle, in order for a goal to be legal.

**If the offensive team fouls in the circle the defensive team is awarded a free hit at the top of the circle.

21. Player Conduct

Unsportsmanlike conduct or swearing can result in a warning and possible expulsion from the game. A substitute may replace a player ejected from a league game.

22. Playing Time Requirement

Each player must play at least one half of the game. In all groups, that equals at least two quarters (twenty minutes). Each player must sit out one quarter of the game (ten minutes). The time each child plays and/or sits out does not have to occur in one continuous block.

> *Exception:* If a team has fewer than ten players, a player(s) may have playing time increased due to the insufficient number of players. The head coach makes this decision, but must notify the referee.

If a coach is not abiding by this rule, parents should contact Rec & Ed to resolve the issue. Coaches not abiding by the rule may be suspended and/or placed on probation in accordance with the Team Sports' Policy on Probation, Suspension and Hearing Procedures.

23. Spectators

It is encouraged that Parents and other spectators shall remain on the opposite side of the field from the players benches. For safety and continuity of play, all coaches, spectators, and substitute players are to remain at least five yards back from the sidelines. Players and coaches are to remain behind the orange five-yard line, marked parallel to and 5 yards outside the side lines. No person may stand on either end of the field or along either goal line (behind or near the goals). No person will be allowed to run the length of the field except players in the game.

24. Sportsmanship

Coaches must emphasize good sportsmanship and behavior before, during and especially after the game during the ritualistic handshake. Parents, coaches and referees should contact Rec & Ed if sportsmanship is not being properly demonstrated by players and/or coaches. Coaches not emphasizing sportsmanship and players not demonstrating sportsmanship may be suspended and/or placed on probation in accordance with the Team Sports' Policy on Probation Suspension, and Hearing Procedures.

> **Note:**
> Disparaging language or communication (whether verbal or non-verbal) will not be tolerated from players, coaches or spectators. Should the official hear or see such communication sanctions will be enforced per the guidelines of the "laws of the game". Should an official be informed that such communication has and/or is taking place, they should call both coaches together and ask them to address sportsmanship with their respective players and spectators. It is the coaches responsibility to address their parents in regards to this. The official can also ask a parent to leave the premises for unsportsmanlike conduct.

25. Substitution

There are no restrictions on the number of substitutions in the game; a rolling substitution policy will be used. The official does not need to be notified. Either team may substitute freely during any dead ball or stoppage of play situation. The substituting player(s) must enter at centerfield and wait until the person they are substituting for is off the field. The defensive team may not substitute during the offensive team's penalty corner.

26. Time Guidelines

The games will be divided into 4 - 10 minute periods, with 2-3 minutes between periods, and 5 minutes at half-time. All games are to begin on time. Officials have the option of shortening the game time if a team(s) arrives late.

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